

Message Text

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, DR

SUBJECT: CURRENT DOMINICAN PERCEPTION OF THE U.S.

REF: STATE 10605

1. THE DOMINICAN PERCEPTION OF THE UNITED STATES IS PROFOUNDLY
CONDITIONED BY A HISTORY OF U.S. MILITARY AND POLITICAL INTER-
VENTION SINCE THE EARLIEST DAYS OF THE COUNTRY'S INDEPENDENCE.
VIET NAM AND ANGOLA ARE FAR AWAY AND NOTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED
THERE OR ELSEWHERE HAS SHAKEN DOMINICANS' CONFIDENCE IN THEIR
TIES TO THE U.S. ACCEPTING THEIR DESTINY AS INEXTRICABLY
LINKED TO THE UNITED STATES, DOMINICANS REMAIN CONVINCED THAT
THE PROPER COURSE FOR THEIR FOREIGN POLICY IS IN CLOSE ASSOCI-
ATION WITH THE UNITED STATES.

2. IN REPLY TO THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS POSED BY THE REFERENCE:

A. UNITED STATES STRENGTH AND WILL WERE MADE PALPABLE IN
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC BY THE 1965 MILITARY INTERVENTION, RE-
AFFIRMING A HISTORICAL ROLE THAT IS NOW A CONSTANT IN THE
DOMINICAN CONSCIOUSNESS. BROAD AND DEEPLY-ROOTED ECONOMIC,
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS KEEP THE DOMINICAN AND U.S.
SOCIETIES CLOSE TOGETHER AND ENHANCE THE U.S. IMAGE AS THE
SOCIETY MOST ADMIRERD AND MOST EAGERLY EMULATED. WATERGATE,

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THE CIA CONTROVERSY, PROBLEMS OF EXECUTIVE-LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS,

AND THE REVERSES BY THE U.S. ABROAD MAY HAVE ERODED SOMEWHAT THE DOMINICAN CERTAINTY THAT THE U.S. WILL ENGAGE ITS MIGHT TO PRESERVE A CONGENIAL WORLD EVERYWHERE, BUT DOMINICANS DO NOT SEE IN VIET NAM AND ANGOLA THE IMMEDIACY OF U.S. INTEREST THAT THEY SEE HERE. GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY AND THEIR OWN HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. HOWEVER, THE MAJOR POWER CENTERS IN THIS COUNTRY ARE CONSERVATIVE, AND GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, THE MILITARY AND THE EXPANDING MIDDLE CLASS SEE THE U.S. NOT ONLY AS A MODEL FOR DOMINICAN SOCIETY BUT AS A BULWARK AGAINST COMMUNISM AND REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE. THESE ELEMENTS ARE APPREHENSIVE THAT THE CIA COULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKENED BY TOO MUCH PUBLIC DISCUSSION, BUT THEY RETAIN THEIR CONFIDENCE THE RESOURCES OF THE U.S. ARE ADEQUATE AND THAT IT HAS THE WILL TO ACT WHEN ITS MAJOR INTERESTS ARE THREATENED.

B. NO.

C. AND D. BECAUSE OF THE LONG, CLOSE ASSOCIATION OF THE U.S. AND THE DR, DOMINICAN LEADERS GENERALLY UNDERSTAND THE U.S. POLITICAL PROCESS. HOWEVER, MANY HAVE DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR HEATED AND DIVISIVE PUBLIC DEBATE ON SUCH ISSUES AS WATERGATE, PAYMENTS BY U.S. FIRMS TO FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVES, OR ON THE PROPER ROLE AND OPERATIONS OF A SECRET INTELLIGENCE AGENCY IN AN OPEN SOCIETY. THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT U.S. FAILURE TO COUNTER SOVIET AND CUBAN MOVES IN ANGOLA, FOLLOWING THE VIET NAM DEBACLE, MAY INDICATE A WEAKENING OF U.S. RESOLVE TO EXERCISE FIRM LEADERSHIP IN RESISTING COMMUNIST EXPANSION IN DISTANT REGIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, DOMINICAN LEADERS GENERALLY KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THE U.S. TO UNDERSTAND, ALBEIT IMPERFECTLY, THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS; THEY INTERPRET CONGRESS' ACTION IN ANGOLA AS A REFLECTION OF ITS VIEW THAT THE ANGOLAN PROBLEM IS NOT OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED AID TO FACTIONS THERE.

E. NO.

F. CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA HAS HEIGHTENED THE SENSITIVITIES OF DOMINICANS TO THE DANGER OF CUBAN MISCHIEF-MAKING POTENTIAL FOR THEIR OWN COUNTRY, BUT THE U.S. REACTION TO CUBA'S
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ROLE HAS NOT AFFECTED DOMINICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE U.S.

G. ALTHOUGH THE DR IS MOVING SLOWLY TOWARD A CLOSER IDENTIFICATION WITH ITS LATIN AMERICAN NEIGHBORS, E.G. THROUGH ASSOCIATION WITH SELA, IT HAS NO INTENTION OF LESSENING ITS RELIANCE ON THE BLATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. PRESIDENT BALAGUER REITERATED RECENTLY HIS VIEW THAT GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. ARE OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE FOR THE DR.

H. NO.

I. NO.

J. THE GODR HAS FULL CONFIDENCE THAT THE U.S. WILL CONTINUE TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

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